

Generation**Future**

# APPRENTICES

Apprenticeships at Fife Ethylene Plant

## Supporting local talent for over three decades

In 1985 we welcomed our first Modern Apprentices to the Fife Ethylene Plant (FEP). Since then, more than 220 talented youngsters have gone on to enjoy exciting careers here at the plant or around the world with ExxonMobil.

Around a third of our workforce began their careers as apprentices, with a number going on to hold senior positions here at FEP, others have been supported to gain a university degree, while many have had the opportunity to work on assignments with ExxonMobil around the world.

FEP has an encouraging, diverse and positive learning culture with great opportunities for people to develop themselves at every stage in their career.

Our four-year programme, in conjunction with Forth Valley College, combines comprehensive in-role and classroom learning, as well as mentoring and personal development. Working directly

with highly experienced engineers we ensure that our apprentices gain not only technical knowledge but also the life skills needed in the world of work.

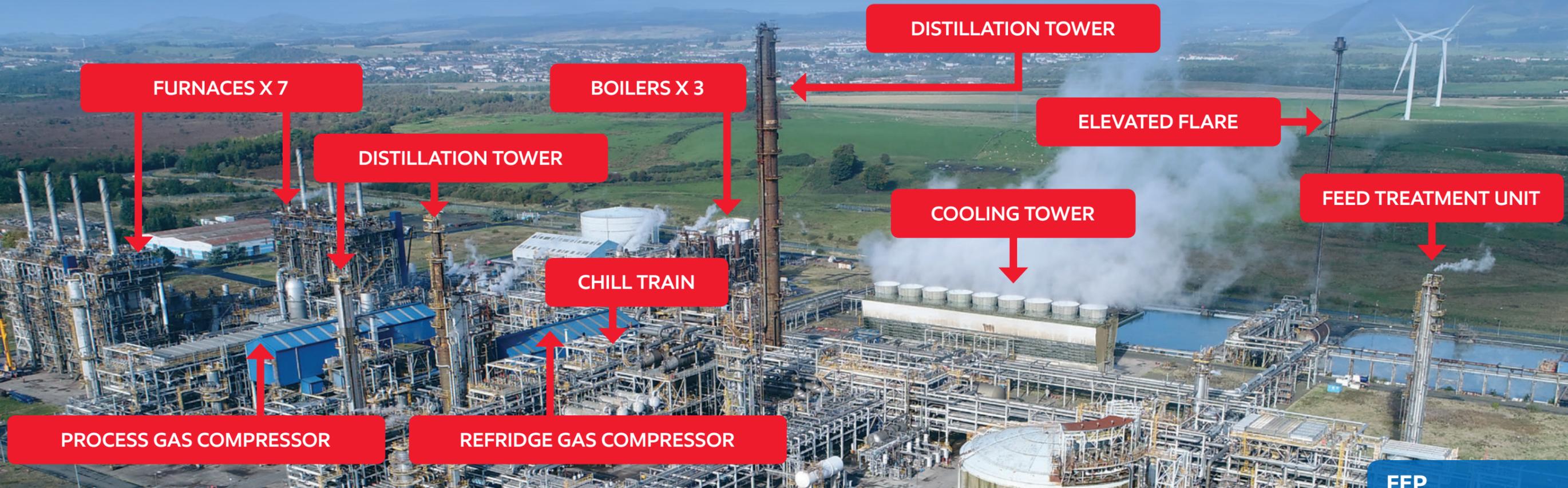
We differ from many companies as we do not hire in large numbers with our intake based on identified future positions. This means the roles are highly coveted and only the best of the best get to join our team.

We are proud of the opportunities that we continue to offer to youngsters, and we are proud of the talented and dedicated team members who have progressed through the programme to secure skilled and well-rewarded positions.

**ExxonMobil**

# BIG plant. BIG roles.

Our apprentices are an important part of our experienced and skilled team who work together to ensure safe operations 24/7 365 days a year.



## FEP FAST FACTS

- FEP is one of the most modern plants of its kind in Europe
- FEP can produce over 800,000 tonnes of ethylene per year
- FEP consists of over 90 miles of pipes
- The cabling in FEP stretches over 900 miles
- Once in our furnaces, the gas circulates at the speed of sound
- The volume of ethylene exported is greater than that of the entire Scotch Whisky industry

## FEP APPRENTICESHIPS

- 35yrs and counting
- 225 apprentices recruited
- 820 years' combined experience
- 33% of all staff started on programme
- 4 year programme



# Foundations of a real career



**Alan Millar** (Dunfermline)  
Maintenance Execution Group Head

Alan is one of our most experienced former apprentices and has built up his extensive knowledge by working in many different areas of the plant.

He began his apprenticeship in mechanical engineering in 1997 and worked briefly at BP in Grangemouth before returning to FEP in 2005 and working his way up through the ranks.

He took advantage of the opportunity to spend time overseas, working on important projects at ExxonMobil refineries in Norway, Saudi Arabia and America to help expand his experience.

“I’ve been fortunate throughout my career that my supervisors have allowed me to flourish and work in lots of different departments as well as to visit other sites and learn a great deal!”

**Correna Altoft** (Kirkcaldy)  
Shift Technician

Correna was the very first female engineering apprentice at Fife Ethylene Plant.

She started her apprenticeship in 1985 aged just 16 as FEP was just starting up. At that time she was the only female among eight process operations apprentices. We have increased our female workforce by over 70% in the last decade.

She spent two years working on shift before moving into the maintenance department where she specialised in working on analysers.

She is currently one of the team responsible for the day to day running of the plant, working in the control room where she is one of the most experienced staff members.

“When I first started out there weren’t many female operators or engineers, but now there are a lot more women choosing engineering as a career.”



**Jack Lawrie** (Cowdenbeath)  
Utilities Co-ordinator

Jack is a leading member of FEP’s engineering team. He started his apprenticeship in process operations in 2013, and began working for ExxonMobil as a Utilities Field Technician after successfully completing it.

He then went on to train as a furnace console operator, monitoring and responding to changing scenarios, and despite being just 24, took additional responsibility in an important project last year.

In 2020 Jack became utilities co-ordinator as part of the team working on the ground flare project.

As well as his busy work schedule he trains as part of the Scottish athletics team and is currently one of the fastest Scots at the 400m hurdles. He has been supported in his athletics pursuits by his bosses and workmates at the plant.

“No day is ever the same and this keeps the job interesting and allows me to constantly develop new skills and enhance my problem solving capabilities.”



**Doug Gillespie** (Crossford)  
Project Execution Lead

Doug has risen through the ranks to become our most senior former apprentice, after beginning his apprenticeship with Fife Ethylene Plant more than 30 years ago.

He has built up his extensive experience by working in many different departments and roles and he spent a year working with ExxonMobil in Rotterdam in 1996 to further his knowledge by working in a different environment.

He also led a team which introduced an important safety programme to the plant in 2011 and is a highly regarded member of the FEP team.

“If you are keen and committed then opportunities are there for people to get noticed and advance their career.”



**Laura Neville** (Dunfermline)  
Process Planner

Laura initially went to university with the intention of becoming a maths teacher, but she soon realised it wasn’t for her.

She began an apprenticeship in administration with FEP but, after expressing an interest in engineering, her boss encouraged her to change her career route, so she transferred to a process operations apprenticeship.

She secured a permanent job in 2015 as a process technician before going on to train as a console operator, with responsibility for running the plant.

Laura now works as a process planner, co-ordinating jobs around the plant and planning important daily tasks both from the control room and in the field.

“I would encourage any girls thinking of an engineering career to follow their dreams. They won’t regret it.”



# What do we look for?



## OUR TRAINING PARTNER

# Forth Valley College

### EDUCATION:

- Minimum of four National 5 at grade C or above in English, Maths, Physics (preferred) or Chemistry plus one other technical subject such as Graphic Communication or Engineering Science

### SELECTION PROCESS:

Our selection process is challenging as we are looking for the Best of the Best

- 1) Online application form including personal statement
- 2) Online aptitude test: A 60 minute test comprising 122 questions covering areas such as literacy; numeracy; information technology; mechanical reasoning; principles of measurement; spatial relationships and understanding electrical principles
- 3) Timed practical skills session to test manual dexterity
- 4) Two interviews, led by four senior members of our team

### WHAT DO WE OFFER?

- Four year programme
- Apprenticeships in Machinery, Electrical, Instrumentation & Analysers
- All apprentices will be mentored by an experienced supervisor

Forth Valley College in Falkirk has partnered with ExxonMobil for over 10 years and during that time has supported more than 30 students through the Modern Apprenticeship programme.

Students study at the new state-of-the-art campus which opened in 2020, giving them access to some of the best science and engineering facilities available, alongside a team of very experienced trainers.

During their time at college apprentices learn how to use various types of tools and equipment and the hand skills relevant to their engineering roles as well as the theory behind it. They are taught by instructors

and assessors who have themselves been through a Modern Apprenticeship programme and have worked in the industry.

Lorraine Kerr, Business Development Partner, works alongside the academic team, assessors and employers to support the apprentices through their studies.

**“I am always delighted and proud to see them complete the programme and secure employment.”**

Lorraine Kerr,  
Business Development Partner

“ExxonMobil has a robust recruitment process and has always recruited candidates who have achieved to the best of their abilities. All of the Modern Apprentices have always been very eager to learn and complete all of the work required of them to a very high standard,” she explained.

“I am always delighted and proud to see them complete the programme and secure employment.”

## YEAR 1

Full time at Forth Valley College gaining first-hand experience and completing an Engineering Operation Level 2 (PEO2) and an NC in the relevant engineering discipline.

### Cammy Sneddon (18)

#### Machinery Technician Apprentice

I have just started my apprenticeship and I was very proud to get it as it wasn't easy. I recently started at Forth Valley College and my first year is full time at college. I'm also learning the theory side and about safety. I'm using different types of saws, hand tools and welding equipment which will be useful in my next year when I will mainly be based on site.

**“I am particularly enjoying the practical sessions and I'm working on projects including building pipework systems and stripping them down.”**



## YEAR 2 & 3

Based at Fife Ethylene Plant while attending college on a day-release basis. Apprentices will study for a Higher National Certificate in their relevant engineering discipline and an SVQ level 3 in Process Engineering Maintenance.

### Ben Sharp (19)

#### Instrument Technician Apprentice

In my first year I gained a variety of skills that helped me develop my knowledge including how to use a range of tools and equipment that I now use on site. I also learned the theory behind measurement and control that I am now starting to apply when I am on site. I have started second year and I'm working towards an HNC in measurement and control. I go one day a week to college and the rest of the time is on site.

**“I'm learning so much from experienced technicians and starting to put what I have learned so far into practice.”**



### Harris Davidson (19)

#### Machinery Technician Apprentice

I didn't want to go to university. I had a pal doing an apprenticeship at FEP and he's really enjoying it, so I decided to give it a try. I've just passed my second year exams and started third year at college. Second and third year are the same – day release at college, and this year I'm studying Statistics and Strengths of Materials, Pneumatics and Hydraulics which I can use when I am at work.

**“It's a great apprenticeship and I think it's much better than some my friends are on.”**



## YEAR 4

Full time on site when apprentices will complete final elements of their SVQ level 3.

### Niamh Blanski (20)

#### Electrical Maintenance Apprentice

I'm in the final year of my apprenticeship. The time has flown by and I've learned so much. Third year was when college got more challenging as I had my final graded unit to achieve my HNC and finish my SVQ. I was given more responsibilities which helped me gain confidence. I'm proud to say I achieved my HNC with an A and completed my SVQ to a good standard.

**“My final year is the one I've really been looking forward to as I am full time on site and will have more responsibility to work on my own.”**



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